

GREENWICH COVE CONNECTICUT

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION



**NEW ENGLAND DIVISION
CORPS OF ENGINEERS-WAR DEPARTMENT
BOSTON, MASS.**

11 APRIL 1947

Greenwich Cove (Cape)

(NOT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE)

WAR DEPARTMENT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
NEW ENGLAND DIVISION
BOSTON, MASS.

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Subject: Preliminary Examination of Greenwich Cove, Connecticut.

To: The Chief of Engineers, Washington, D. C.

SYLLABUS

The Division Engineer is of the opinion that the improvement of Greenwich Cove is worthy of further consideration. He recommends a survey to determine the cost and justification of a suitable improvement and the extent of local cooperation to be required.

AUTHORITY

1. This report on preliminary examination of Greenwich Cove, Connecticut is submitted in compliance with Congressional directive contained in Section 7 of the River and Harbor Act approved 24 July 1946.

DESCRIPTION

2. Greenwich Cove, Connecticut is on the north shore of Long Island Sound near the western end. It is about 32 miles east of New York City, and about 2.5 miles west of Stamford Harbor, Connecticut. The outer harbor, known as Captain Harbor, is partially separated from Long Island Sound by the Captain Islands, and by rocky reefs. Greenwich Cove opens into Captain Harbor at its eastern end. The Cove is generally shallow, the greater part being less than six feet in depth. It varies in width from 2000 feet at its entrance to 4000 feet immediately east of Pelican Island, thence decreasing to less than 100 feet at the extreme northern end. The Cove extends inland about one mile from Captain Harbor, and thence a small tidal stream extends about 0.75 mile to the head of navigation at the Post Road (U. S. Route No. 1). A natural channel about 500 feet wide with depths of 6 to 14 feet extends about 0.5 mile into the Cove, terminating just north of Greenwich

Island. The Cove is almost completely landlocked and is protected on the south by a peninsula known as Tod's Point. This peninsula, which comprises a total of about 150 acres, is owned by the Town of Greenwich. It is developing the peninsula for public use.

3. No bridges cross any of the navigable portions of the waterway. The Cove is tidal with practically no fresh water inflow. The mean range of tide is 7.2 feet and the spring range 8.5 feet. No prior reports have been submitted on this waterway and there is no existing project. The locality is shown on U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Charts Nos. 222 and 1213, and on Plate 1 (File No. Gh. 275) accompanying this report.

TRIBUTARY AREA

4. The area tributary to Greenwich Cove comprises the Riverside and Old Greenwich sections of the Town of Greenwich. The Town of Greenwich has a permanent population of about 40,000 and a grand list of about \$200,000,000. It is primarily a residential suburb of New York City. There is some truck gardening but no important manufacturing. Greenwich is situated on the main line of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad. Commuting by train to New York City is common procedure for many business people residing in Greenwich. The Post Road, U. S. Route 1, passes through Greenwich, Riverside and Old Greenwich. The main passenger automobile highway between New York and New Haven is the Merritt Parkway which passes about 5 miles north of Greenwich Cove.

TERMINAL AND TRANSFER FACILITIES

5. The Town of Greenwich recently purchased the entire peninsula lying on the south side of Greenwich Cove. There is situated on this property a boat storage area, a boat house with 250 lockers, a small marine railway, and a pier. These facilities are well adapted for public use. A boat yard is located at the north end of the Cove, just south of the Post Road. Landing facilities and one marine railway are available at this yard; but, due to the lack of water in the entrance channel, these facilities are used infrequently except by small craft.

There are no commercial piers and none are needed. Pleasure craft facilities are adequate at the present time. Enlarged facilities will be required if any improvement is made in the Cove.

IMPROVEMENT DESIRED

6. A public hearing was held at Greenwich, Connecticut on 6 December 1946. It was well attended by State and Town officials, representatives of local clubs, local business interests, and citizens interested in the improvement of Greenwich Cove. Several plans of improvement were presented at the hearing, all envisioning the development of the Cove for pleasure craft use. The Town desires improvement of the Cove in order that it may proceed in the development of pleasure craft facilities on Tod's Point, and as an adjunct to the Federal project in Greenwich Harbor. The Committee for the Improvement of Greenwich Cove, representing property owners and residents of Old Greenwich and Riverside, requested provision of an anchorage basin adjacent to the town pier on Tod's Point, a channel 50 and 30 feet wide to the Post Road, a channel 50 feet wide east of Greenwich Island, and a channel 50 feet wide cutting through the neck just south of Lucas Point. A depth of 6 feet below mean low water was proposed for all improvements.

7. The Old Greenwich Boating Association requested provision of an anchorage area 6 feet deep to accommodate about 400 boats and necessary connecting channels, and suggested that the gap between Pelican (Sand) Island and the shore be filled with dredged material to lessen maintenance costs of the basin and to provide additional protection for the proposed anchorage.

8. It was stated at the hearing that existing anchorage areas in the town are entirely inadequate for even the local fleet of pleasure craft. Spoil disposal areas were offered adjacent to areas proposed to be dredged. In addition, it was indicated by the First Selectman that the Town, in accordance with its past practice, could be expected to contribute a reasonable share of the cost of the improvements but that no appropriation of funds would be made at this time. A spokesman for

the State expressed the belief that State funds would be made available to match any contribution which the town might make, as the State, by legislative action, had approved such procedure.

COMMERCE

9. There are no records available to indicate that there is any commercial use of Greenwich Cove except a small commerce in oysters and oyster shells. The Cove is used primarily by pleasure craft. Local interests believe that improvement of the Cove would greatly stimulate this use. A substantial increase in local boatyard and retail business is expected to result from the anticipated increased use of the Cove which would result from suitable improvements.

VESSEL TRAFFIC

10. Although there is considerable movement of pleasure craft between Long Island Sound and the Cove, no records are available to indicate the total annual number of such movements. A local fleet of about 75 sail and power boats with drafts up to 4 feet makes use of the Cove. This fleet is valued at \$75,000 and expends about \$10,000 annually for service and repairs. During the summer season about 150 transient craft use the Cove over weekends. It is expected that completion of the proposed improvements will result in a large increase in the local fleet and that many additional transient boats will seek the accommodations afforded by the Town-owned area south of the proposed basin.

DIFFICULTIES ATTENDING NAVIGATION

11. Lack of depth restricts navigation in a major portion of the Cove to periods of high water. There are no other unusual difficulties attending navigation.

WATER POWER AND OTHER SPECIAL SUBJECTS

12. There are no matters of water power or flood control pertinent to this report. Prospective use of the Cove as a seaplane base would not be adversely affected by the proposed improvements. The deposition of dredged material on marsh land owned by the Town would improve the

land and make it suitable for the establishment of additional parking areas, thereby benefiting the Town. None of the work contemplated will have an adverse effect on wildlife or shellfish.

SHORE LINE CHANGES

13. Some desire was expressed at the hearing for the excavation of a channel through Tod's Driftway for the purpose of preventing accretion in the Cove. The probable effects of such action can not be determined at this time.

DISCUSSION

14. Greenwich Cove is a well protected basin situated near the western end of Long Island Sound. Boating activities in this area are expanding.

15. Local interests are seeking additional pleasure craft facilities in the general area. The recently authorized improvement for Greenwich Harbor is insufficient to meet existing needs due to the large number of transient pleasure craft visiting the locality during the summer season.

16. Local interests desire an anchorage basin in Greenwich Cove of sufficient size to accommodate at least 400 boats. A depth of 6 feet is considered adequate. The present fleet using the Cove numbers about 75 valued at \$75,000. Transient craft using the harbor more or less regularly in the summer months increase the number to about 225. The improvements requested would provide convenient access to Town-owned property on Tod's Point and would enable many more craft to use the waterway. Improvement of the Cove would probably justify the installation of additional repair and storage facilities. The Town may be expected to provide enlarged facilities on its property, including marine ways. It is conservatively estimated that increased expenditure of \$50,000 annually for storage, repairs, and purchase of marine supplies will result within 3 years after improvement of the Cove. Benefits from increased use of the Cove as a harbor of refuge would be substantial.

17. The full improvement requested by local interests will probably not be advisable at this time. The channel to the existing boatyard on the north side of the Cove would be expensive and the benefits to be obtained therefrom would probably not justify it. Because of maintenance problems that would be involved and the nearness of the natural entrance westerly of Tod's Point, the advisability and need for constructing a channel across Tod's Driftway are believed to be doubtful. Other improvements appear necessary and desirable for Federal prosecution, although further study may make desirable some modification of the plan.

CONCLUSIONS

18. Existing and reasonably prospective small-boat navigation in Greenwich Cove warrants further consideration of the improvements desired by local interests. Improvement of the Cove will probably result in benefits in excess of annual charges. Local cash cooperation should be required. It is practically assured.

RECOMMENDATIONS

19. The Division Engineer recommends that a survey be made to determine the extent and cost of such improvement as may be justified, and the proper basis for local cooperation to be required.

R. G. MOSES
Brigadier General, U.S.A.
Division Engineer

1 Inclosure:
#1 - Plate 1 (File No. Gh. 275)

